

Jiddu Krishnamurti

Seventh Public Talk in Saanen

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We have been saying during all these talks that human nature, what we actually are, has changed very little during all these centuries. There is a great deal of the animal in us, aggression, acquisitiveness, seeking power, position, and prestige. We have actually changed very little. Though technologically, medically, scientifically there have been vast changes, tremendous so-called progression, human beings throughout the world remain almost as they were five or seven thousand years ago. We still are in conflict within ourselves; we are still at war with others; we have divided ourselves into religions with various dogmas, into nationalities, into economic spheres, but basically we remain almost as we were when history began.

Seeing all the human misery, not only physically, but psychologically, inwardly as well as outwardly, it seems so absolutely necessary to change radically, to bring about a total revolution in the mind. Most of us lead very superficial lives. We are technologically greatly skilled. Outwardly we have progressed. We have a great deal of knowledge which we have accumulated through centuries, in every direction, and we have almost conquered nature, but inwardly we are very superficial. If we are at all serious - and it is only the very serious who have life, who do live - we ask ourselves whether it is possible to go beyond this superficiality. We have tried to go beyond the mere surface of existence, through religions, through various forms of ritual, through beliefs, through taking drugs, the very latest form of stimulation. All these bring about a series of experiences, but human beings remain as they were, with all their misery, with all their conflicts and their extraordinarily superficial lives.

The more intellectual we are or the more emotional one is, the more we read books, acquire knowledge and become very clever, very argumentative. We build a defense behind which we protect ourselves. If we are emotional, we become very sentimental, doing good work, getting lost in social reform, interfering with others, trying to guide, help, and change society. All that is extraordinarily superficial. How has it come about that human beings, though they have had so many experiences of wars, of constant battles within and without, with all their misery and suffering, both physical and psychological, still live on the surface?

The more we live on the surface, the more we get caught in the net of new theories, new theologies, new philosophies, changing religions, changing groups. With all this we are familiar. How are we to break through the crust of superficiality? When we ask how, we invariably look to a system to help us, a method, a formula, an idea, which we can use to penetrate and go beyond this superficial outward existence. I think that very question "How?" is a detriment because we fall in the trap of asking someone, a teacher, a professor, someone who knows much more than we do - at least we think he does. When we say "how," we are always looking for a pattern, a system, which we can imitate, follow, practice. We don't see that the very practice, the very imitation, the very following - it doesn't matter who it is, including the speaker - the moment we imitate, follow, set up an authority, we have already become superficial.

It is one of the curses of humanity that, psychologically speaking, we have established the pattern of following, accepting authority as a guide, inwardly, to help us go beyond the superficiality. I hope those who are listening, who are actually serious, who have not come for the first time just out of curiosity, who are really quite earnest about this kind of thing, are listening to find out if they themselves are following an idea, a pattern, a formula, and if they are, to see that the very acceptance, admittance, and following make the mind superficial, petty, and narrow. It is like the people who are great nationalists - they are the poison of the world; they prevent the unity of human beings; they bring about wars; they divide human beings as this and that. In the same way, when we are imitating, following, we have already set a limit, a boundary to our thoughts, to our feelings. That very boundary, that very limitation brings about a life which is very superficial. We think that through possessing knowledge which we have acquired from the books of others, through experience, through tradition, we are already beyond, deeper than the ordinary, superficial life. Does knowledge, psychological knowledge, not the knowledge of skills, of technology, of science, of mathematics, of medicine, but the knowledge that we have stored up about the psyche, about ourselves - does that knowledge make for a life that is not merely on the surface? I question whether such knowledge does bring about a depth to our lives. Obviously it does not.

Do the various religions bring about depth to life? Again, obviously not. You may withdraw to a monastery, become a hermit, isolate yourself, enclosed within a dogma, within a belief, within an idea. Surely that does not lead to a deep, profound life inwardly, nor does science. Religions, dogmas, knowledge, imitation and following, the setting up of authority of any kind, psychologically, do not bring a rich, full life that is beyond the transient, beyond the surface life in which there is the constant battle, the constant competition, the constant travail of human anxiety. What does? What makes a human being into an individual? We ought to be able to distinguish between the individual and the human being. The individual is the localized entity, the Englishman, the Frenchman, the nationalist who has the boundary of a certain culture or tradition, but the human being is part of the world. There are worldly problems, problems of war, problems of hate, conflict, competition, ambition, greed, envy, anxiety, guilt - these are human problems, which are our problems. The world is becoming more and more superficial, though there is more and more comfort, social security, the avoidance of more and more wars, and greater amusement - whether the amusement lies in going to church and getting excited about some ritual, or the amusement of football, cricket, or tennis. All this is making us extraordinarily content outwardly, superficially, while inwardly, deep down in our hearts, in the secret privacy of our own minds, there is such dearth, such emptiness. How is one to go beyond all this? One can't follow anyone anymore. The teachers, the priests, the concepts, the theologians are all too absurd, too immature; one has put that aside long ago, if one is aware of all these problems. One is no longer committed to an idea as a communist, or as a socialist, because the political problem is the unity of man, not according to the communist, labor, or this or the other idea. The moment one divides the world into patterns, there is again disunity.

One must put aside all this, actually, not theoretically, not problematically. One has no faith anymore in religions, in priests, in communism, in socialism. None of these are going to solve one's problems. One has put this question, knowing that one is superficial, outwardly leading a life that has very little meaning

because there is always death, there is always conflict, there is always something mysterious which one knows nothing about. One is always seeking, seeking, seeking, and therefore leading a more and more superficial life, because a man who seeks may think himself very serious, but he is not. What is he seeking? He is seeking ultimately some gratification, some kind of enduring pleasure. He may call it by different names, give it a holy connotation, but it is actually the continuation of his own pleasure, a projection of what he desires. Being serious, one discards all this in the psychological realm, as one must if one is at all intelligent, skeptical, revolutionary, not obeying any authority. In the field of technology there must be authority; there must be someone to tell one because there is knowledge which is necessary. But psychologically if one has wiped away all this, one is no longer nationalistic, no longer committed to any country, any religion, any group, any form of ideology. Then one asks oneself if it is possible to go beyond this utterly vain, lonely existence. I think most of us do ask this question. We may ask it very seriously, or merely out of curiosity. If we ask it seriously, and not out of curiosity, then whom do we expect to answer the question? The moment we expect another to answer it, we are already in the field of superficiality. Then we are looking to someone; the someone becomes the authority, and we are willing to follow that authority because we want to go beyond this meaningless, utterly stupid and valueless life. When we do ask that question, how will we find the answer, knowing no one is going to tell us? We don't want anyone to tell us. If they do, they can only tell us in terms of the positive - do this; follow that; don't do that; don't do this. Then they become our authority, and then we are completely lost.

Will time solve this question? - time being tomorrow, or ten years from now. Or do we believe in some kind of future life, or in resurrection? Will time solve this? We are not talking about time by the watch, chronological time, but time which is a gradual process, a gradual change, mutation, a gradual revolution. Revolution is never gradual, and revolution is never according to a pattern. The moment it is according to a pattern, to an idea, it is no longer revolution. Only a serious mind can answer this question, and we must be serious because life demands it; the world demands it; all the incidents and crises of every moment of our lives demand that we be serious, not serious in some belief, not serious in following something, which is infantile, but with the spirit of seriousness, with a mind which says, "I really must find out"; and to find out we must go to the very end of it, whatever it demands.

A mind that is serious is not a mind that pursues some line, that practices some belief, some dogma. A man who is violent and practices nonviolence may think he is dreadfully serious, but it is an actual avoidance of violence, an escape from the fact of violence. Such a man is not a serious man at all. One has tried various ways to go beyond this ordinary, monotonous, routine-burdened life, taking LSD or other drugs; oh, so many ways! At the end of it all, man is still shallow, empty, bound by his own visions, thoughts, and self-centered activity.

Will psychological time solve this problem, since it is a gradual process? Obviously not. If you say that someday in some future life, or in five years time I'll be happy, I'll have food when I am hungry, it is of little value now. I am not satisfied by the promise of a future meal. I want food now. One of our unfortunate deceptions is that we can use time as a means to something, as a means of change, revolution, mutation. It is not possible. No amount of time, no authority in any form, no following, no asking someone else to tell me what to do, no looking to a religion, to a pope is going to make a complete revolution in the mind. I deny all those totally, knowing that they are absolutely empty, a circus. Then what has taken place in a mind that is serious, that has denied time as a means of bringing about a mutation within oneself - time being today or tomorrow, the extension of today?

I deny all that. I deny authority - which means no following, not looking to another, not depending on anyone, no guru, no teacher - intelligently, not as a reaction, not as a revolt, but because I see the truth of it, because I see the intelligence of it. When I have put aside all that, what has taken place in the mind? In the past I have believed; I have had faith in someone to tell me what to do; I have followed the scriptures, or Marx or Engels or the latest theologian; or perhaps I don't believe in anything and have merely become

cynical, hopeless, which is another reaction, and therefore I do not have a serious mind at all. If I, seeing all this, understanding all this, if I am not in revolt but understand it and see the worthlessness of it, if I have put it all away, then what has taken place in my mind? Through negation of what has been accepted as the norm, as the pattern, as the way to something, to this or that, through the denial of all that, the mind has become astonishingly sensitive and therefore extraordinarily alive and intelligent, and through what is called the positive, it has become negative. It is only when the mind has completely denied all that we have called the positive way of existence that there is a state of negation. That very state of negation is the depth of life because it is only in total negation that there is something new, something which is not the result of seeking, wanting, groping after. It has nothing whatsoever to do with any system or philosophy. Then the mind, being rid of every conditioning, every influence, all the encrustations of centuries, seeing the whole significance of it, not in reaction but seeing what it is all worth and putting it totally aside, then the mind becomes astonishingly alive, sensitive, and intelligent. It is only when the mind is completely empty of the old that there is the new. Then there is no longer the question of whether one is leading a superficial life, because then one lives, and the very living is a movement which is not the movement of the old pattern, the old life. It is a totally different way of living in which there is not the animal at all. That is really the revolution because it is like love. Love must be always new; love is not memory; love is not desire. The moment desire comes into it there is pleasure and the memory of the continuation of that pleasure, and therefore it ceases to be love. A mind which has understood all this, which has understood time and authority, is free. Only a mind that is totally free knows the beauty of life. That mind is not bound by any boundary, and the life is one of extraordinary peace and beauty. Perhaps we can discuss what we have talked about. We can ask questions, discuss, go into it more in detail. But, as we said the other day, a right question brings the right answer; a wrong question will have no meaning. If the right question is asked, the right answer is in the question. This does not mean that we are trying to choke off questions. We must ask all these questions, doubt, have tremendous passion. To find out we must ask questions, and in asking questions we will find out for ourselves whether we are asking the right question or the wrong question. In questioning we are exposing ourselves to ourselves, not to the public. Who cares what someone else thinks?

Question: How is it possible to go beyond physical pain and its irritation?

Krishnamurti: "One may want to go deeply and be terribly serious and earnest, but if one has physical pain constantly and the irritation of it, the boredom of it, the agony of it, how can one go beyond?" I am afraid it is very difficult. If one has constant pain one finds a very good doctor, a first-class doctor who is not just a drug merchant, and he may help one. Even if one does have constant pain one can learn to dissociate oneself from the pain. Life is a resistance, a defense; one fights everything, building a wall around oneself; but if one accepts it one goes with the pain. Everyone has physical pain - a great deal, a great many days, or pain for an hour or so. That is an unfortunate occurrence in human life, but one can begin to be dissociated from it. One can look at it, not resist it. To bring in a simile, an example, Of a night one can be awakened by a dog that is barking, a machine that is making a noise all the time, a radio overhead that is blaring out some absurd stuff. The instinct is to resist it, to get angry about it, to get irritated with it, but if one listens without resistance, just listens, goes with it, moves with it, then one will see that this noise is no longer affecting one. In the same way one can look at one's pain, one's toothache, the incessant and constant pain; one can observe it objectively and then one can, perhaps, go beyond it.

Comment: As I listen to you it seems to me that in a certain way I understand perfectly, but the other thing does not take place. I see it very clearly, but the real thing does not happen.

Krishnamurti: The question is, have I really seen it, or do I just think that I have seen it, which is entirely different. Have I seen it merely intellectually, verbally, theoretically? If I see it intellectually, verbally, theoretically, it has no value whatsoever, but if I see it nontheoretically, nonverbally, nonintellectually, then it is bound to take place. Therefore I must examine what I mean by seeing. Do I see it verbally, or do I see it nonverbally? Do I see it intellectually or nonintellectually?

I cannot answer for you. I cannot tell you how you look, but you can find out for yourself how you look, how you listen, how you see, how you observe, how you understand, whether it means something to you. How do you look? How do you listen? How do you observe? How do you understand? Does it mean anything to you? We are using the word see to imply all that. What do you mean when you say, "I see"? Do you mean that you hear the word, and because that word has a reference you understand it; or, do you hear the word and translate that word according to your memory? Please follow all this carefully, sir. When you say, "I see," you generally mean that you heard the word. You have understood because I am speaking English, and that word has a meaning to you. You are looking through that word at the thing, and therefore you are not looking. The word is interfering. The word, the symbol, the idea, the memory - all those are interfering with your observing, seeing. Can you look, can you listen, without interpretation, without the word, without the memory? There is a river flowing by. Can you listen to that noise, listen and not react? There is a train going by. Please listen to it. Are you listening without the word, without thought, without memory, without recognition, or are you saying, "It is a train and I am irritated because I want to listen"? When you listen like that, in that state you have affection, you have tenderness, you have love, but if you say, "That train! It is interfering with my listening; it is a nuisance and I get irritated with it," you are not in a state of listening, observing. To observe, to listen, demands great affection, great care; we do not care, we do not have affection. All that we know is irritation, resistance, suppression, or recognition. All those destroy care, affection, listening.

Comment: We are a lot of monkeys, going up and down a chain, making an awful noise. We are never silent for a single minute, and therefore we do not listen. It is this noise which is the intellectual, the everlasting thinking, worrying, going over and over again. The other is the intuitive.

Krishnamurti: The word intuitive is a most dangerous word, like nationalism. I can have an intuition because it is what I want. I want something deeply; I feel that it is right, and I call that intuition. We must distrust every word because every word, unfortunately, is loaded. We know only one thing, that our minds are like monkeys, restless, chattering, up and down, everlastingly moving, moving, moving, thinking, worrying. How can such a mind look? Obviously it cannot. Then we say, "How am I to train it to be quiet?" We spend years in training it to be quiet, and then it becomes another kind of monkey. (Laughter) This is not a joke. Please do not laugh. People have spent their whole lives going from one monkey world to just another monkey world. To realize what silence is demands tremendous inquiry. It is not just a matter of a moment. It is only the completely silent mind that can observe, that can listen, that can learn - learning in the sense of what we are talking about, not accumulating knowledge and taking notes. Learning has nothing to do with acquisition because learning is a movement, and this movement can only come into being when there is silence. Unfortunately it is not possible to go into this question of silence now. Perhaps we can discuss it next time, because we have to go into it very, very deeply. A mind that is silent is an extraordinary mind. It is a free mind. We cannot make the mind silent by force, by discipline, by control, because then it becomes sterile, dead, but to understand what silence means we have to see, we have to look. Look at a flower completely, without all kinds of memories and thoughts in operation; just look. When we love someone with all our being, not just with memory, desire, sex, and all the rest of it, we love out of that tremendous silence. Then we have communication without words, without idea, without recognition.